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Disability Care and Support Inquiry
Productivity Commission
GPO Box 1428
Canberra City ACT 2601

Our Ref: 20/100/054

Dear Commissioners Patricia Scott, David Kalisch and John Walsh,

Productivity Commission Response to Disability Care and Support

Wyndham City is a local government in the Western Metropolitan Region of Victoria. Wyndham has experienced the largest and fastest growth of all Victorian local government areas and is the fourth fastest growing LGA in Australia (source: ABS 3218.0). It is estimated that in 2010 19% of the population of Wyndham has a disability, and 5.6% of the population have disabilities causing profound or severe restriction of communication, mobility and self-care (calculated from the 2003 SDAC).

Wyndham City welcomes the proposed reform to current service systems to support people with disabilities, carers and family members. Wyndham City supports the premise that the current service systems are flawed, inequitable and often crisis-driven. The proposed scheme should broaden opportunities, empower individuals, and deliver appropriate supports for people with disabilities to fulfil their potential.

Who should be the key focus of a new scheme?

Any person with a disability should be able to access the scheme. It should be assumed that individuals whom identify as having a disability and seek access to a Disability Support scheme (via self, carer, advocate etc.) have a level of need requiring support to allow them to reach their full potential. A needs-based assessment process would be required to determine the range of individual needs and how that translates into support and resources. Individuals should be empowered to direct the process of identifying their unmet needs and proposals to support them. A qualified professional should offer support to this process by providing information, and assistance to explore options of individual interest. The effect of disablement as a result of the individual's environment should be considered during this process.

“Second, the scheme is not intended to provide services to all people with disability, many of whom may need no or few supports.” It is acknowledged that people with severe or profound core activity restrictions have significant need of support; however this does not preclude others from requiring any support, and therefore they should be eligible based upon individual need. Individuals with a disability may only require significant support for a short time; support at key times (such as at onset of a disability, during or following periods of transition, ill health or carer unavailability); or when it is recognised that regular support could contribute to overall wellbeing and happiness. The process for individuals to access the scheme must therefore be efficient, to effect timely support.

Which groups are most in need of additional support and help?

The process to determine the level of benefit or entitlement for an individual may consider the following issues as priorities:

- Persons with severe or profound disabilities;
- Persons impacted by multiple disadvantages, e.g. loss of informal carer; homelessness; remote residence; language and cultural barriers; poverty; dislocation; carer with a disability or ageing; ageing with disabilities.

What services are needed?

Training and support must be available through the scheme to empower individuals in planning, advocacy and leadership, or to support an advocate of preference. Only then will all areas of service delivery (including early interventions, aids and equipment, transport assistance, accommodation options, respite and care) optimally develop, as vision and innovations will be led by and for the people who are impacted most by them.

The scheme recognises that there are people with disabilities who do not have long-term disability care and support needs, however do need to have barriers addressed to enable opportunities for full participation in society. A scheme of this national magnitude cannot pass up the opportunity to influence systemic issues that fall outside the traditional Disability Services model. The scheme requires an integrated framework with other governance models in Australia for legislation, policy and strategic direction, to remove societal and environmental barriers. By developing this scheme in an integrated way, improvements should result in:

- social attitudes to recognise the person and their abilities
 - support, develop and celebrate community development and capacity building initiatives that create more accessible and inclusive communities;
- accessible public and private built environments;
- educational supports, including intervention aides, specialist training and support for teachers;
- meaningful employment opportunities
 - implement schemes that result in employers and businesses employing people with disabilities in meaningful roles, in addition to current focus on workforce training to enhance skills of individuals;
- aged care sector that responds appropriately to individuals with disabilities
- disability does not disappear as a person ages and often the effects of the disability are compounded by the ageing process. There needs to be an improved interface between the



disability sector and the aged care sector to allow individual supports to be met, regardless of funding models and bureaucratic process;

- appropriate and affordable accommodation options of choice
 - individuals should have choice about whether they live independently, in shared accommodation or supported accommodation, and where and how this happens;
- affordable access to health care specialists
 - current issues include inaccessible specialists; waiting lists for specialist services that can inadvertently impede early interventions or compound issues ; expense of specialists and multiple specialists can make support inaccessible; reporting requirements of specific speciality professions that serve only for the administration process of the current system;
- accessible and safe transport
 - to allow individuals to connect to their community transport must be is available, appropriate, accessible, affordable, welcoming, and affordable.

Wyndham City supports the proposed scheme, in recognition of the scope to improve the lives of people with disabilities. Every person in the community contributes to the social, economic, cultural, political and spiritual life of society in Wyndham City and the proposed scheme has potential to strengthen community inclusion.

Regards,



Priscilla Mayne

MANAGER AGED DISABILITY & RECOVERY

